



# GURU NANAK DEV

THE APOSTLE OF PEACE

STUTI MALHOTRA

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**GOODWORD**





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## FOREWORD

“Guru Nanak Dev – The Apostle of Peace” is an attempt by Stuti Malhotra to elaborate the concept of peace in Sikhism. This is her tribute to the great Guru on the occasion of his 550th birth anniversary, which is being celebrated all over the world. I think this is the right time to discuss the teachings of Guru Nanak Dev ji when human beings are facing multiple problems worldwide. There are many human races, ethnic groups and religions on this earth. Religions, which should have taught people to treat all human beings as equal, have acted, on the contrary, as divisive forces. This was the situation in India in the 15th century, when the founder of Sikhism, Guru Nanak Dev ji (1469-1539) was born. The world is facing similar divisive activism at the present time, which makes the philosophy of the Guru Sahib even more relevant nowadays.

In his preaching, Guru Nanak laid great emphasis on the brotherhood of mankind and the fatherhood of God. His universal message is one of peace, love, unity, mutual respect, service and dedication to all of mankind. He turned people away from violence towards peace, converted tyrants into compassionate human beings and transformed societies afflicted by different kinds of difficulties into blissful communities.

At Sultanpur Lodhi in Punjab, when he went into the “Bein” (a rivulet in Punjab) canal and came out after two days after his spiritual communion with God, he declared,

*“Na koi Hindu Na Musalman”* meaning “There is no Hindu and no Musalman”. Subsequently, this message became the foundation stone of his doctrine. He taught us that all human beings, regardless of skin colour, wealth, caste or gender, were created equal.

Guru Nanak witnessed the great extent to which strife and discrimination afflicted the people and he was very deeply troubled by their plight. In his *bani*, known as “Babar vani”, the hymns are the outpourings of a soul touched by the horrible sufferings inflicted on helpless citizens --, men, women and children -- in the battles between the invading forces of Babar and the ruling Lodhi Afghans.

His canvas, inter alia, spans the larger social perspectives of pervasive moral decline, political corruption and injustice. The contributing factors may be variously identified as the prevailing political chaos, corrupt state apparatus, oppressive and apathetic governance, pervasive inequalities, cultural alienation, degradation in moral values and religious beliefs, and the oppression of alien dominance.

In this environment of fear and insecurity, the Guru observed that the religious leadership did not inspire trust and that men of learning, engaged as they were in petty squabbles, were interested mainly in amassing worldly possessions. Both Qazis and Brahmins spoke untruths and caused grievous loss to others.

*“Mūrakḥ pandiṭ hikmaṭ hujaṭ sanjai karahi piār.”*

(SGGS P-469)

(The fools call themselves spiritual scholars, and by their clever tricks, they love to gather wealth.)

The Guru Sahib raised his voice against them fearlessly

and advocated that universal brotherhood was the only way to peace of mind. The Guru did not rest content with a mere proclamation of the norm of brotherhood but also suggested practical measures to realize it. The measures are both negative and positive. The negative measures entail a complete renunciation of enmity (*nirvair*). The positive measures entail altruism (*paropkar*) and service to humanity (*seva*). To achieve this, the Guru formulated the concept of the Gurmukh. A Gurmukh, according to his definition, is 'one who does good to those who do good to him and even returns good for evil.' The Gurmukh never prides himself on the good he does to others. He is always willing and ready to help, and one who does not act in this way is described as a "manmukh". The Guru also preached service by the Gurmukh. Service, according to the Guru, means to help the oppressed and the needy, so that they may be uplifted and brought on to the same level as the more fortunate in life. Thus, his teachings of "*Kirat Karo, Naam Japo and Vand Chakho*" are at the core of Sikhism. The Guru gave concrete form to this tenet of social justice by prescribing the donation of one-tenth of one's income (*Daswandh*). He not only preached this doctrine but also practiced it during the last 17 years of his life, when he himself ploughed the land, started the institution of the Langar and religious congregations at Kartarpur Sahib, now in Pakistan.

The peculiarity of the human situation, according to Guru Nanak, lies in the fact that each person in his material existence has a narrow and limited viewpoint which the Guru Sahib identified as *Haumai* (I-am-ness). His solution was to preach to human beings the doctrine of *Sachiana* so that

they might rid themselves of this failing and reach the apex of self-realization (*'Kiv Sachiarā Hovie'*) . He advocated the adoption of this principle as a path to spiritual progress. The concept of peace is hidden in such self-realization because it can be attained only by meaningful moral progress. This moral progress cannot be made while the self is ceaselessly under the influence of opposing violence which drives it in this or that direction. Guru Nanak showed full awareness of this aspect of the moral problem. These propensities and springs of action, which according to the Guru, may hinder moral progress are five, namely, *kam*, *krodh*, *lobh*, *moh* and *ahankar*, which mean respectively concupiscence, anger, avarice or covetousness, attachment and self-pride. These are called the 'thieves and burglars' who continuously steal away all merit. Gururji also preached the doctrine of '*Grehsath me udasi*', meaning 'living with family and connecting with the absolute.' The teachings of Guru Nanak on this subject are expressed in the maxim: "Live like a lotus, in the water but detached from it".

The study of the spiritual realization of Guru Nanak, reveals how the message of oneness, unity, universality and shared humanity seem to radiate and reverberate across the *Guru-Sabad* (sacred word). The Guru Sahib fearlessly spoke out for this oneness, unity and universality, the sanctity of all life and faiths, meditating upon God's name (*nam-simran*), upholding the equality, justice and dignity of all life, the affirmation of one race, and one brotherhood. He made a special point of the virtues of tireless and selfless service, making one's daily living through righteous endeavours, and sharing one's



blessings with others, etc. These are the true instruments to achieve world peace.

Guru Nanak was a seer, a mystic and a poet, who preached the universal love which is the key to peace. He knew that genuine peace is not possible when there is pain and suffering in society. This can be removed only when we respect our fellow human beings, give up selfish obsession, enjoy doing service for others and remember that God resides in all. Guru Nanak's universal message is highly relevant in the present scenario because he invites everybody to do something about world peace and to work together for a tolerant and just world order.

My sincere congratulations to Stuti Malhotra for her endeavours in this core subject. Her profound understanding of Sikhism is extraordinary. I hope she will continue to delve deep into the Guru Granth Sahib's philosophy and make it possible for the masses to understand Guru Nanak Dev's ideology and the practice of dharma.

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## PREFACE

The ultimate aim of human life is to be in communion with its Creator. Man has been sent into this world to understand what is the purpose of his life, what is required from him in the pre-death period and what he will confront in the post-death period. He has the entire creation around him to give answers to his questions. But the only criteria should be to have an open mind and surrender to his Creator.

The year 2019, the occasion of five hundred and fiftieth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev's birth, is a good time to remind ourselves of the revered master's teachings. He spoke of one God, universal brotherhood, love, humility, simplicity, equality and tolerance. His teachings have universal applicability and validity for all time to come.

This book expresses my devotion to my Guru, who my Creator knows, and I want to thank all my spiritual brothers and sisters for their blessings and encouragement. Also, I do not have enough to thank God for giving me the most supportive and encouraging husband, Dr.Rajat Malhotra, who has played a pivotal role in my life.

I'm indebted to Prof. Rawail Singh for contributing foreword for my book. His words of appreciation were a great source of encouragement for me. Also I am thankful to Dr Saniyasnain Khan for publishing and helping in giving final shape to my book.

The foundation of my education in Sikh studies had been embarked in Punjabi University Patiala, therefore I am

grateful to the university which gave me the opportunity to enter the world of academia.

I would also like to thank the contributors to Sri Granth which is an excellent Search engine to understand the Shabad of the Guru Granth Sahib. It has been of immense help to me in understanding the meaning of and find points in its words of wisdom.

Guru Nanak Dev focussed on many topics a few of which are the importance of *Naam*, ill-effects of ego and how to rid of it. The importance of the Guru and its explanation of the three pillars of Sikhism, i.e. '*Naam Japna, Kirat Karna and Vand Chakhna*.' I have focussed on these topics in this essay. May God accept my efforts.

Stuti Malhotra

## GURU NANAK DEV

Guru Nanak Dev was born in Talwandi, which is now called Nankana Sahib, on the 20th of Baisakh, 1526, corresponding to the 15th of April 1469. His father was Kalian Das Bedi, popularly known as Mehta Kalu. He was a patwari -an estate agent of Rai Bular in Talwandi. The Guru's mother was Mata Tripta and his elder sister Bibi Nanaki.<sup>1</sup>

Guru Nanak Dev, founder of the Sikh religion was an apostle of peace, unity, love and the brotherhood of man. As the popular Urdu saying puts it :-

*"Nanak Shah Fakir  
Hindu ka Guru,  
Mussalman ka pir"*<sup>2</sup>

This means Guru Nanak Dev was king of savants. The Guru of Hindus and a spiritual guide of Muslims. It is a reflection of the universal applicability of the teachings of Guru Nanak Dev.

The new religion addressed the common man and could be practiced in daily life. Guru Sahab wanted people to be educated on the basis of religious values. He had one basic message, the unity of religion and the refutation of ritualistic worship. He preached that man should free himself from dead religious practices and focus on the daily tasks of life while remembering God. He preached that one should not renounce the world and go to the forests to be in communion with God. Instead, one should be a social person and while leading a family life, he should be detached from the material world and focus on the one God. Guru

Sahab said that all human beings were equal, irrespective of caste, creed, wealth and social status. He taught us that right action and compassion were far more important for salvation than following empty rituals.

Guru Nanak Dev stressed the importance of being truthful, just, compassionate and God-fearing. He was an enlightened teacher for the human race.<sup>3</sup> At the age of thirteen, he questioned the futile ritual of *janeu* (sacred thread tying ceremony of Hindu boys).<sup>4</sup> Even as a young boy, Nanak was extremely sensitive to the things around him. He pondered over the problems around him and wanted to find solutions. Solutions which an ordinary man could follow to attain salvation. Guru Nanak Dev was an apostle whose purpose was to dispel darkness and spread light. He emphasised that the spiritual realisation one achieves is not obtained by merely worshipping but by the grace of God. Without the grace and blessing of God, we cannot be in communion with Him.

Guru Nanak Dev was fearless and he openly criticised the evils around him. He was a world teacher. His mind and vision knew no barriers. In an age when freedom of expression and thought was limited, Guru Nanak participated in debates and discussion in order to bring about a change. He made people think and go on to question rituals and superstition.

Guru Nanak Dev sowed the seed of spiritual enlightenment in his disciple, Lehna whom he renamed Angad.<sup>5</sup> This flourished in his spiritual successors through whom his holy words continued to be disseminated. This torch of guidance helped to promulgate and strengthen his mission which became consolidated in a new and complete religion called 'Sikhism' – a religion bereft of superstition while extolling



values such as kindness, benevolence, munificence and determination.<sup>6</sup>

Guru Nanak cast the light of logic and rationality on the darkness of empty rituals and superstition. He established the universality of God and the futility of human beings in confining Him to a particular religion, caste or community.

Guru Nanak Dev freed mankind from the shackles of superstition and the disparities rooted in caste, colour and race. He taught mankind that God bestows blessings not on the basis of caste but on dedication and truthfulness of a human being. In this age, the teachings of Guru Nanak are eminently applicable and we need to put them into practice in our daily lives.

A renowned historian J.D. Cunningham, says “Guru Nanak extricated his followers from the accumulated errors of ages, and enjoined upon them devotion of thought and excellence of conduct as of prime importance as duties. He left them erect and free, unbiased in mind and unfettered by rules, to become an increasing body of truthful worshippers.”<sup>7</sup>

Guru Nanak Dev gave us the message of universal brotherhood, peace and unity. When asked which was the greater religion, he said,

“Without good deeds both lead only to suffering,  
Neither Hindu nor Muslim finds refuge in (God's  
court).”<sup>8</sup>

He taught us to follow the path of devotion, faith, thought and action. This was a proclamation of the oneness of people, religion and culture. It gave a new status to men and broke all barriers that lay between them. This was the beginning of a new charter of life.

Guru Nanak Dev gave form to national integration : this could be seen from his having as his constant companion, Bhai Mardana, who was a Muslim bard. He preferred the hospitality of Bhai Lalo, who was a carpenter, as opposed to that of a wealthy upper caste person, Malik Bhago, as he wanted to demonstrate that there was no disparity between any class or sect. <sup>9</sup>

He said that our faith should be firm, our hearts should be pure and we should not be proud or greedy. We should embrace all mankind with kindness.

Guru Nanak believed in the unity of mankind. He said, "I believe in the teachings of all religions and to me the teachings of all religions lead to God."<sup>10</sup> He condemned any barrier which segregated one from another. This is why the principles of Guru Nanak are as applicable today as they were in his own time. Bradshaw once said that the religion founded by Guru Nanak was the "faith of a new age". He said, "Sikhism is a universal religion with a message for all of mankind. It is the summom bonum for mankind." <sup>11</sup>

Guru Nanak Dev supported institutions like marriage and family and encouraged man to be positive and a giver member of society. He said, "Remember the Supreme Reality that created the universe." <sup>12</sup>

He taught us about the brotherhood of mankind and gave us the universal message of peace, equality, mutual respect, love and well-being for the whole of mankind. <sup>13</sup> Guru Nanak Dev changed violence as a modus operandi into peace and converted tyrants into compassionate human beings.

He laid emphasis on the attainment of God by following

the name of God, the understanding of Truth, keeping the company of Holy Saints and following the Guru, and this could not be achieved without God's mercy and will.

Guru Nanak Dev did not differentiate between men on the basis of caste, colour or creed but on the basis of being God oriented man (Gurmukh) and a self-oriented man (Manmukh).<sup>14</sup> The former works for God, upholds truth and works for the welfare of mankind, whereas the latter works for himself and becomes entangled in worldly affairs for selfish reasons.

Guru Nanak Dev set off on journeys in order to dissipate the ignorance and put a stop to the ritualistic practices that were predominant at that time. The reason for undertaking long and strenuous journeys has been explained by Bhai Gurdas Ji in a var (a form of Punjabi poetry) as follows:-

“Guru Nanak once sitting in trance envisions that the whole world (humankind) is in flames (with the fires of lust and anger), and in the absence of the true Guru, the world is groping in pitch darkness. He also heard the cries of the common people.” (Bhai Gurdas ; Var I, section 24/5-6)

Guru Nanak witnessed the terrible condition of the common man and decided to travel to spread the message of love to all, irrespective of any particular sect, gender or religion.

When Guru Nanak travelled, he dressed himself in strange garments, his outfit being a combination of what the holy men of Hinduism and Islam wore.<sup>15</sup> This was to emphasize the universality of his teachings. He travelled to all four corners of the country.

Going about from place to place, he spread the message

of the unity of God to all of mankind. If he underwent the ordeal of travelling it was to tell everybody the truth. For this, he had discussions and debates with a variety of people. As he travelled, he educated people about the futility of superstition practices and distanced people from falsehood, hypocrisy and hatred.<sup>16</sup>

The amazing aspect of his peregrinations was the sheer perseverance and determination with which Guru Nanak embarked upon this undertaking. He travelled to guide people and help them to extricate themselves from the plight of superstition. It was divine compassion and love for all of mankind which made him travel at a time when there was no means of transportation.

When Guru Nanak Dev visited the Gorakh Matt, he went and sat down under a pepal tree. This withered old pepal tree, which had been lifeless, turned green and put forth shoots. The nuts (reethey) of the soap nut tree, which were bitter, became sweet (mitthey reethey) all of which sent out the message of love and harmony. This is a way of saying that Guru Nanak Dev imparted fresh life to the message to live in peace which had become impossible due to the bitter strife between the followers of different faiths and sects.<sup>17</sup>

Bhai Gurdas ji rightly says in Var, “Wherever he trod he left behind indelible foot prints that became a place of honour and worship.”

Such was the lustrous personality of Guru Nanak” (Var, 1/27/4)

## The Sacrificial Thread

An important part of the life and teachings of Guru Nanak Dev has come down to us in the form of biographies. The following are incidents which have been selected therefrom for the moral elements they enshrine.

When the Guru was nine years of age, it was customary for a Hindu boy to have a ceremony to tie on the janeau, or sacrificial thread. His father Mehta Kalu had made all the preparations and elaborate arrangements had been made for guests, family and neighbours. It was a big gathering. After the family priest, Hardial had made all his preparations, Mehta Kalu was asked to bring his son. When Guru Nanak came, he sat down with a smile on his lips. And when Hardial was about to put on the thread, the child asked the pandit, "What good will the thread do me? What is the advantage of it?" The pandit tried to explain the ritual and told him that, without the thread a child was not a Hindu and not wearing the thread would relegate him to being of a low caste. Then Guru Nanak asked how a thread which could be torn or soiled could save him. He said that when a person died the thread did not go with him and he would like to have such a thread as would be with him even after he died. He said, "The thread should be made from the realisation of God, which brings him into communion with the creator." He wanted a thread made of mercy as its cotton, where contentment would be its thread, purity would be the knots, and the truth the needed twist." <sup>18</sup> All these blended together should be used to live a pious life from day to day. This was the religion which Guru Nanak Dev gave us which is free from any kind of meaningless ritual. At that tender age, he questioned the ritual and made the Pandit speechless with his questions. He taught us that the ultimate virtue is to be a God-conscious person on a daily and moment-to-moment basis.



## The Bowl of Milk and Jasmine Flower

As mentioned in the biography there is another incident when Guru Nanak Dev was travelling to Multan and was greeted by Sufi saints. The Sufi saints had already heard about the popularity of Nanak and how Nanak brought solace to people. The Sufis wanted to keep Nanak away from Multan knowing that he had followers at various places. A gift was brought for Nanak with extreme care. It was an earthen bowl full of milk. Any awkward step would spill the milk. When Nanak looked at the gift, he understood the allegory behind the pot full of milk. He went and brought a jasmine petal and placed it on top of the milk and returned the bowl. Mardana (his companion) was surprised to see all this and asked Nanak the reason behind the jasmine petal. Nanak explained that the pot full of milk signified that there were many religious teachers in Multan and the Sufis feared that adding even one more would result in the displacement of another. But Guru Nanak wanted to tell them that he had no intention of displacing anyone; he only wanted to add the fragrance of his teachings. Just as jasmine brought fragrance to milk, similarly his teachings would add to the teachings of the Sufi saints.<sup>19</sup> The message was that there was always the scope for the fragrance of godliness all around us and we needed to be open minded to accept things.<sup>20</sup> This tale symbolises how we have to make adjustments everywhere so that people may overcome any insecurity they may have because of us. We should spread goodness around us so that people may accept us, and when we are adding the fragrance of godliness, people may be forthcoming and accept us.

## The Brahmin and His 'Kitchen'

In another biography it is mentioned that once a Brahmin visited Kartarpur where a Dera (a socio religious organisation) was being built. When the Brahmin refused a glass of water served by an attendant, Guru Nanak Dev understood that the Brahmin was a caste conscious person and that was why he refused to drink the water. Guru Nanak Dev explained to him that he could be certain about how his food was cooked and whether pure water was being used for bathing. But how about the grain which was grown and the water which was drawn by a lowly caste person? <sup>21</sup> Guru Nanak Dev explained to the Brahmin that in the eyes of God all were one. A man's position in life did not depend on the caste into which he had been born but upon the actions he performed. It is not the external sanctification or purification of the body but the internal sanctification of the soul and spirit which is needed. After hearing these words of wisdom, the Brahmin, who had refused to partake of langar asked Guru Nanak Dev if he could please have langar (communal meal) without delay because he was very hungry. Such are the teachings of Guru Nanak which we need to follow, i.e. we should use logic to explain to other this error in following superstition. This can be done only when we have such a feeling of well-wishing and compassion for other as will extricate them from the confusion and dilemmas of life. This also tells us that we, the followers of the Guru, need to show compassion and kind-heartedness for everybody, and evince our desire for the well-being of all. This will surely awaken people's consciousness. We should overcome anger and recognise the need to forgive selflessly.

## GURU NANAK'S CONCEPT OF THE GURU

The word Guru etymologically is derived from the word 'gu' which means darkness and 'ru' which means removal, so one can understand that Guru connotes 'removal of darkness'.<sup>22</sup> He is a realised soul who leads the believers to a state of enlightenment thus enabling them to come out of the darkness of ignorance.<sup>23</sup> The Guru has been symbolically mentioned at various places as '*joti*', the light which brightens; '*khevat*', a boatman who helps one to cross the ocean; '*data*', a donor of wisdom and has been alluded to by many other such names.

The concept of the Guru, the teacher or enlightener is central to Sikhism. The Guru is the intermediary between man and the one God.<sup>24</sup> With the Guru's guidance and teachings, one develops the love and devotion for following the true name and attains the blessing of God. When the Guru guides man, his desire to meet the Lord is satiated. He guides man and puts him into communion with God. The Guru is an envoy of God who provides the means to knowledge. He is a humble messenger with the duty to direct mankind along path of God. He is an intermediary between God and his creation. He was an enlightened soul, through whom the revelation of God or His message and teachings was sent to mankind. The Guru is the one who guides humanity as to how to face the practical challenges of life while being inspired by the word of God. The Guru's word is the panacea of all ills and one needs to develop a love for the True Name and recite the name of God to attain the true bliss of a fruitful life. The

Guru is a God-oriented man who discovers the unknowable and the infinite, and whose focus is entirely on the word of God. If one wants to follow the will of the Almighty, it becomes imperative to follow the teachings of the Guru. He attains the stage of equipoise (sehaj). He also attains the stage of being in unison with the Lord by reciting the True Name and enjoys eternal bliss. The Guru is the mediator between human beings and the Lord.

The Guru is the benefactor, the home of perfect peace. He is the lamp to illuminate the three worlds. When a man is reconciled to the Guru, he gets the everlasting good of peace. "On meeting the true Guru one becomes pure by adopting the discipline of truth. By mounting the ladder of the Guru, one goes higher and higher. But the Guru meets others through His grace and then the fear of death is dispelled."<sup>25</sup>

The Primal Guru according to Guru Nanak is God himself. According to him, Guru Nanak Dev, the Guru has many roles to perform out of which few are:-

- (1) The initiation into the Name or the word and
- (2) Imparting the knowledge of the Divine.<sup>26</sup>

He says that by meeting the Guru, base metal is transformed into gold. The Guru gives man the nectar of the Name and man's maladies and confusion disappear.<sup>27</sup> In the way the lotus flower blooms in water and cannot survive without water, man cannot survive without knowledge. Man's thirst to acquire knowledge is only satisfied by taking the name of God which is given by the Guru.

While in conversation with the yogis Guru Nanak Dev said:-

*"Satgur milai anḁherā jāe."*<sup>28</sup>

"When we meet the Satguru-The One God, Darkness is dispelled."<sup>29</sup>

He also says:-

*“Mansā āsā sabaḍ jalāṛ.”* <sup>30</sup>

“Through the Word of the God, my desires have been burnt away.” <sup>31</sup>

And he also says

*“Pooray gur te sāch kamāvai gaṛ mīṭ sabḍe pāṛ.”* <sup>32</sup>

“Through the Perfect Guru, live the Truth; through the Word of the God, the state of dignity is attained.” <sup>33</sup>

In this Shabad (hymn in Guru Granth Sahib) Guru Nanak Dev tells us that when one is absorbed in the word of the Guru it helps us to become merged in the absolute and receive immense peace. It is said :-

*“gur bachnee avigat samaa-ee-ai tat niranjan sahj lahai.”* <sup>34</sup>

“With the help of Guru’s Word, one merges in the absolute, and intuitively receives the immaculate essence.” <sup>35</sup>

*“naanak gurmukh sabad nistaaray.”* <sup>36</sup>

O Nanak, the Gurmukh is emancipated through the Shabad.

In all the hymns of Guru Nanak, the focus is on remembrance of God, which can only be achieved by the guidance of the Guru. <sup>37</sup>

Guru Nanak Dev says in Siddha Gosht while in conversation with saints :-

*“bin gur bharmai aavai jaa-ay.  
bin gur ghaal na pav-ee thaa-ay.  
bin gur manoo-aa at dolaa-ay.  
bin gur taripat nahee bikh khaa-ay.  
bin gur bisee-ar dasai mar vaat.  
naanak gur bin ghaatay ghaat.  
jis gur milai tis paar utaarai.*



*avgan maytai gun nistaarai.  
mukat mahaa sukh gur sabad beechaar.”*<sup>38</sup>

“Without the Guru, one wanders,  
Without the Guru, one's work is useless.  
Without the Guru, the mind is totally unsteady.  
Without the Guru, one is unsatisfied, and eats poison.  
Without the Guru, one is stung by the poisonous  
snake of worldly desires, and dies.  
O Nanak, without the Guru, all is lost.  
One who meets the Guru is able to cross all the  
hurdles.  
His sins are erased, and he is emancipated through  
virtue.  
The supreme peace of liberation is attained,  
contemplating the Word of One God.”<sup>39</sup>

Man has to seek guidance and inspiration from the Guru. The foremost lesson we must learn and never forget is that there is one and only one God, who is the Benefactor of all beings. Guru Nanak Dev has given the message that to attain eternal peace we have to meditate on the Guru's word with sincerity and that will lead us to bliss and happiness.

It has been mentioned in the Shabad that when one consults the Guru, there is no other place to seek guidance.

*“Mai āpnā gur pūchhī dekhiā avar nāhī thāo.”*<sup>40</sup>

“I have consulted my Guru, and now I see that there is no other place at all.”<sup>41</sup>

Without remembering God, one has wasted one's life. He says we should not waste our life in earning more and more material wealth and should not seek the pleasures of this world but should devote ourselves rather to taking God's name and our only focus should be to seek blessings of God, so that we do not have to fear judgement in God's court.

In another Shabad, Guru Nanak Dev says :-

*“Gur paorī beṛī gurū gur tūlhā har nāo.”<sup>42</sup>*

The Guru is the Ladder, the Guru is the Boat, and the  
Guru is the Raft to take me to the Lord's Name. <sup>43</sup>

The message of this shabad is that we should focus only on the advice of the eternal Guru and remember God's Name. Except for the Guru, nobody else should be followed. This shabad tells us that the Guru is like a ladder which helps us in climbing up and surmounting all hurdles, thus helping us to be in communion with God. He grants us the boat or raft of God's name to cross the worldly ocean.<sup>44</sup>

There is another Shabad :-

*“Gur bin kio tarīai sukḥ hoe.”<sup>45</sup>*

“Without the Guru, how can anyone swim across to  
find peace?” <sup>46</sup>

This Shabad reminds us that we have a limited time in this world, so that time should be utilised to remember God under the guidance of the Guru. Guru ji explains this to us through the analogy of a boat and the ocean. He says “Man drowns in his own ego, but if he sails in the boat of truth (i.e. he lives a truthful life ) and makes the lord's advice and commands his captain, he can safely sail across life's ocean.”  
<sup>47</sup> That's if we want to cross the worldly ocean and live in peace and contentment, we have to follow the Guru's advice and meditate on God's name.

When we follow the advice of the Guru, the love of God permeates us and we experience unceasing communion with the Lord ; this continuous love helps us to rid ourselves of all evil and negativity, thus leading us to eternal peace. The Guru helps us to be in harmonious communion with the all-pervading God. He advises us that “when we meet the Guru, all our doubts and maladies are removed and we realise the

inner self. We are able to understand the unstruck divine music.<sup>48</sup>

In this Shabad Guru Sahab explains to us that

*"Hor kiṭai bhagaṭ na hovaṭ bin satgur ke updes."*<sup>49</sup>

"There is no other way to perform devotional worship, except through the teachings of the true Guru."<sup>50</sup>

Guru Ji advises us not to get distracted by performing futile rituals. These rituals are a waste of time and will not lead man to be worthy of union with God. The only way to perform God's service is by following the instruction of the Guru.<sup>51</sup> He says that the mind is a precious gift from God. When we meditate on God's name and are in the company of any true congregation following the Guru, the mind gets reshaped and becomes priceless. A Guru's follower is always imbued with the love of God.

Of those who meet the True Guru are blessed and obtain his guidance, he says, "They who are blessed with the company of the True Guru are enlightened and sagacious persons. When one is guided by the Guru, he is able to swim across life's ocean and will be accepted in the court of God with honour."

Guru Sahab explains in the Shabad that :-

*"Bājh gurū gubār hai bin sabḍai būjh na pāe."*<sup>52</sup>

"Without the Guru, there is only pitch darkness; without the guidance, understanding is not attainable."<sup>53</sup>

The message of this Shabad is that life is so uncertain and unpredictable that we do not know what will happen tomorrow. So we should utilise the present available time in remembering God. We should follow the Guru's guidance and remember God if we want to enjoy the Divine presence

at all times and in all places. We forget that death may come to us at any time and we should not defer anything which will save us in God's court tomorrow. He explains this to us by the analogy of the fish. If a fish is unheeding of the net, it will become entangled in it (worldly desires) and will eventually die. Only those who are protected by the Guru are saved from falling prey to the fascinations of the world. If we want to save ourselves from worldly problems, Guru Sahab advises we should pray to unite with God and is only upon meeting God that we can have true peace. When we are free from fear of death and would take death as meeting ones creator then only we will be free from perpetual pain of suffering of this world. Death is inevitable and only the refuge of the Guru can save man from the fear of death.

The Guru Sahab advises in a Shabad :

*"Hao gur pūchhāo āpnē gur puchh kār kamāo."*<sup>54</sup>

"I ask my Guru for his advice, and I follow the Guru's advice."<sup>55</sup>

In this Shabad Guru Nanak Dev tells us that if we want to surrender to God we should be pure and immaculate. And to attain that stage we should follow the guidance of the Guru. By seeking and following his advice, we can rid ourselves of our egos and sins and will always be in a state of meditation in the name of God. Without the Guru, man goes astray and cannot be in possession of God's name; and without His name, man has no purpose in life. The gist is that the Guru is the giver of peace, and the remover of lust, anger, greed and negativity, which are obstructions in the path of peace, tranquillity and happiness.<sup>56</sup> Once man has devoted himself to God, he can never forget God, even for a moment.

In the way that a scientist is able to study and appreciate

a flower as compared to the way a common man should, when one is imbued with the word of God by following the teachings of the Guru, he is likewise able to appreciate and understand life in a much better way. When one follows the teachings of the Guru he is able to understand the creation plan of God and does not become disturbed by problems or challenging situations. A scientist is able to appreciate the beauty of a flower and its fragrance because he has deep understanding. In the same way a God-oriented person has a high intellect and is always imbued with the word of God which helps him to understand and appreciate the things around him in positive manner. An ordinary person will be ignorant and naïve about the things around him. It is the Guru who satisfies the mind and, in addressing the queries of the individuals helps him to realise his true self. The guidance of the Guru makes man introspect and helps him to attain self-realisation.



## THE PHILOSOPHY OF NAME (NAAM)

*“The Lord and the name of the Lord, is the panacea, the medicine for the entire world. The Lord and the name of the Lord brings peace and tranquillity. The sins and suffering of those who partake of the Lord’s sublime essence, through the Guru’s teachings are all eliminated.”*<sup>57</sup>

The Guru helps man to submit to the Supreme Almighty and it is the Guru only who gives the seeker the name of God. The name of God brings peace and comfort to mankind. Gurbani explains to us that without God’s name life is incomplete. It is said that with the teachings of the Guru, the heart is illuminated and the only solace is God’s name. It helps man to overcome the material desires with which he is surrounded. One needs introspection to overcome worldly desires and surrender to the word of God given by the Guru.

There is also emphasis on God’s name in the Guru Granth Sahib. When we remember God, perplexities are resolved, and with His aid man crosses the tempestuous ocean. Falsehood vanishes and doubt is banished. Thus the remembrance of the Lord makes us forget all problems and difficulties. When Guru Nanak Dev was travelling to Kartarpur, a disciple said to Guru Sahab, “You tell us to remember God, but how can we do so? We repeat the word, but only our lips move.”<sup>58</sup> The Guru Sahab replied, “It is only by His favour that the power to remember Him is acquired.” Hearts melt and selfish motives die. We have to replace lust, wrath, covetousness and evil thoughts by forgiveness and

love. Then the mind is controlled and does not wander any more. The sacred word is the manifestation of God.

To explain God's name Guru Nanak Dev tells us that :-

*“Gurmaṭī nām dhiāīai sukh rajā jā tuḡh bhāīā.”*<sup>59</sup>

“When those who follow the Guru's teachings meditate on the Name of the Lord (*Naam*) they are filled with a joyful peace, and they surrender to the Will of God.”<sup>60</sup>

By reflecting on the Guru's teaching we should learn and realise God's name. Those who have meditated on God's name have filled their treasure chest with the wealth of God's name. Those who have believed in the immaculate name of God have been adjudged true in the court of the Lord.

The Guru Sahab tells us that :-

*“Man re rām japahu sukh hoe.”*<sup>61</sup>

“O my mind! remember God and be happy.”<sup>62</sup>

When one is imbued with the word of God, the place he lives in does not matter whether it is a forest or a home, everything seems equal. The mind is at peace and there is no evil around him to trouble him. It is only when one is in union with the Lord that the mind is controlled and does not run after the material world. At that moment one enjoys peace and poise.

The Guru advises that when we sing the praises of the Lord and meditated on it we are guided by His command and enjoy the bliss of the union with Him. The mind is not entangled in worldly affairs when one is meditating on the word of God.

Guru Nanak said :-

*“Sifat salāhan sahj anand.”*<sup>63</sup>

“In the Lord’s praise and adoration are intuitive peace, poise and bliss.”<sup>64</sup>

He taught us that only the remembrance of God could purify us and everything else is futile. When one is absorbed in the Shabad, the Lord’s name is the only remedy to save him from the distractions and negativity of this world. The Lord’s name brings peace and poise and evils and sins are forgotten. It is like a divine elixir. God’s name destroys all mental distortions and helps us to find hope in this world. God’s name destroys the ego and makes the creation plan of God easily understandable to man; he is able to understand the purpose for which he is sent to this earth. God’s name eradicated greed, lust and love for the self which were the main obstructions to God-realisation. The Guru helps us to apprehend the God’s name and to cross the ocean of ambiguity. Repeating or reciting the word is not enough; one needs to contemplate it and practice it. It is only the God’s name which helps to rid ourselves of ignorance. God’s name helps man to be unified with the Supreme Reality. When one takes the true name, the highest state of reality and bliss is realised, but this is only with the guidance of the Guru. ‘Self-oriented people’ (*manmukh*) are so obsessed with themselves that they do not take the name of God: they are ignorant of it. Immersed in the ego and doubt and they have strayed from the path of God. The God-oriented person i.e Gurmukh, on the other hand, always abides by the instruction of the Guru and is at peace and always ready to serve God; only the name of God quenches his thirst.

The taking of God’s name makes one enlightened and invokes the blessing of God. It makes one humble, truthful

and contented and fosters the spirit of well-wishing for all of mankind.

Nanak says that when we sing the praises of the Lord and meditate on this we are guided by His command and enjoy the bliss of union with Him. The mind is not entangled in worldly affairs when one is meditating on the word of God.

In this Shabad, Guru Nanak Dev tells us that if we want to end our problems, sorrows and difficulties, the only solution which can help us is taking the name of our true master, the Lord.

*“Anḍhai nām visāriā nā ṭis eh na oh.”<sup>65</sup>*

“The blind man has forgotten the name of God; he can attain peace neither in this world nor the next.”<sup>66</sup>

The Shabad teaches us that God and his name are limitless; they are vast and beyond description. We should ponder over His creation, which is without limits, and focus on His name. Man has a limited stay in this world. We should not therefore waste our time on worldly pleasures. Instead we should focus on the name of God which will give us salvation. Guru ji also warns us that the limited time man has should not be wasted on worldly pleasures, as we will be held accountable for this. He also reminds us that God is great and eternal and is the Creator. We should utilise the time in dwelling on God's Name.

There is no amount of worldly, material wealth which can help us; it is only the continuous remembrance of God that can save us. If we remember the name of God, we will be on the straight path and will not go astray. Every material need will be of lesser importance and only the name of the Lord will be of paramount importance. The name of the Creator can save the individual and also the world. It

is only the remembrance of God which will save us in this world and in the world hereafter. In this world we will be saved from all the negativity and vices of lust (kaam), rage (krodh), attachment (moh), conceit (ahankar) and greed (lobh).<sup>67</sup> These evils destroy an individual and can obstruct his communion with God. But when an individual takes the Name of God, he is free from this and is able to live his life peacefully in the world.

Guru Nanak Dev explains in the Shabad :-

*“Nīṭ ahinis har parabh̃ seviā saṭgur dīā nām.”*<sup>68</sup>

“Day and night, continually serve the Lord God; the True Guru has given the name of Lord.”<sup>69</sup>

Just as fake currency does not work and is of no value, so also is man worthless until he remembers God and takes his name. His coming into this world is futile until he is in communion with the Supreme Almighty. He has to remember God to gain entry in into His court with honour.

Guru Nanak Dev also explains to us that :-

*“Gurmaṭī nām riḍai vasāe.”*<sup>70</sup>

“By following the Guru’s teachings, God’s name abides in the heart.”<sup>71</sup>

In this Shabad, Guru Nanak Dev tells us that when we focus on God’s Name our minds do not go astray but rather stay focussed and this brings us peace and happiness. But to achieve this one needs to surrender one’s ego. It is only through the Guru’s guidance that one achieves peace by remembering God on a continuous basis and one is able to shed one’s ego. The Guru makes God real to man and he is thus able to attune himself to the service of God. Taking God’s name helps one to understand God and surrender to Him, the supreme authority, in the absence of which one

remains in ignorance and pain and suffers till the end. True peace can only be attained by repeating God's Name under the guidance of the Guru; that is when God's blessings are bestowed.

## THE PERSPECTIVE OF GURU NANAK ON EGO

The Gurus have clearly stated that the ego and devotion are at variance with each other. For devotion, modesty is the pre-requisite. The ego leads one to ruin and pride makes a man fall. God does not like anybody to be full of pride and ego and if this incurs God's wrath then in just a few moments man can be reduced to dust. The ego is the major reason for man's fall. It is the principal negative factor and exists in every human being in one form or the other. He forgets his Creator, that his body and mind were given to him by God for a purpose i.e. to remember and praise God. Man comes into this world with an ego and leaves with an ego, thinking that he is the master of his own life. He forgets God, who is his Creator. A person earns and gives the comforts of life to his family thinking that he is the sole giver; he is obsessed by nothing other than his ego. Guru Nanak Dev says :-

*"Pasū milēh chāṅāṭā khaṛ khāvēh amṛīṭ dēh."*<sup>72</sup>

"Even beasts have value, as they eat grass and give milk."<sup>73</sup>

In this Shabad Guru Nanak Dev explains to us with an example of cow. He tells us that cow gives milk when she consumes grass. It means the nature convert something which is not milk into milk. But the life of a man, who is an intelligent being, is useless if he does not take the name of God. He is given the opportunity at all time to see the creation of God all around him so he should avail the



opportunity to take the name of God. His life is cursed if he forsakes the name of God.

Guru Nanak Dev has emphasised that man suffers due to quandaries of 'self'. He is entangled in five vices i.e. lust (*kaam*), anger (*krodh*), greed (*lobh*), emotional attachment (*moh*), and ego (*abankaar*). But these vices can be controlled, i.e. lust with self-discipline, anger with toleration, greed with contentment, affection with devotion to God and the ego by being modest and humble. Everything else is in vain, until man takes shelter in the Name of God. When one is overpowered by the ego, one is not able to understand the Will and Name of God. Such people just stay busy in carrying out daily chores, while failing to understand the creation plan of God. The ego is a serious malady which can be cured only by the name of God.<sup>74</sup>

Ridding oneself of the ego is quintessential if one is to be in communion with God. Man will never be able to realise God until he has obliterated it. When man understands the creation plan of God, he realises that everything is created and controlled by God and then he surrenders and is able to cast away his ego. He realises, consciously, that God is everything and that he is just a miniscule creation of God.

Guru Nanak Dev says that an egoist builds his own castle. He is like the spider who weaves his web and then gets entangled in it. When one is engrossed in the word of God, one realises the divine knowledge and no longer desires material things. He renounces the material world. Therefore, Nanak says we have to abandon our ego to understand the divine plan and live according to the commandments of our creator. If we

want to end our sufferings, we have to suppress the ego and meditate upon the word of God.

Guru Nanak Dev explains to us that egotism and selfishness are very enticing; self-centred pride having vitiated everyone. Everybody becomes enthralled by ego (*haumai*) and attachment (*moh*).

Guru Sahab tells us that we should not waste our lives in physical pleasures. Our true love should be for God. Guru Ji advises : “Meditate on God’s name and His attributes. Those who are engrossed in pride, egoism and attachment to worldly affairs have forgotten the name of the Lord and are caught up in duality and doubt, and are consumed by the flames of desire. Only those who are sheltered by the Guru are saved, while others are undone by their worldly occupations. Those who are able to rid themselves of the ego are fortunate and blessed, having got direct guidance from God.”<sup>75</sup>

In another Shabad, Guru Nanak says :-

*“Haumai nivrai gur sabaḍ vīchārai.”*<sup>76</sup>

“The ego can be removed by pondering over the word of the Guru.”<sup>77</sup>

In this Shabad, Guru Sahab tells us that egotism is overcome only by contemplating on the word of the Guru. Guru Nanak Dev taught us that rather than renouncing the world, we have to renounce the ego. He preached to us that real peace can be achieved only through God’s name, which is only attained by the grace of the Guru. He says, “When we indulge in the ego we cannot realise God.”<sup>78</sup> Only when the ego is banished can we attain the supreme blessing.

Truth can be achieved only when the ego is surrendered. When one's ego is overpowering, it never leads to anything constructive. This explains how when a person is an egoist he cannot contemplate on the name of God and it is only when he has surrendered his ego that he can attain perfect bliss and salvation. The ego causes a man to be consumed by his worldly desires. He think it is he who has created his wealth.

When a person cultivates love for the eternal God and realises Gurbani as the word of God, while dispelling the ego, and anger from within, then God's name comes to his mind. We have to meditate on God's name with a pure mind to reach the door of salvation.

If we distance ourselves from the word of the Guru, we will be lost. The self-willed Manmukh do not attain union with the Lord. When we focus on Gurbani we meet the Lord and never suffer pain. The focus on Gurbani makes the Lord supreme and eliminates ego. Where there is egoism, there is no God. Only with the blessing of the Almighty will one discard the ego and accept the commandments of God. When one ponders over the teachings of the Guru one rids oneself of the ego and attains peace.

Guru Nanak Dev tells us that we should pray to God and that it is God alone who will save us. One can enter the court of the Lord only when one is blessed with the name of God. Also when one utters true words he rids himself of the malady of egoism. Those who are in thrall to the ego are in utter darkness and cannot understand the reality. Only when one follows the True Guru and Name of the Lord only then can his bondage be broken.

Guru Nanak Dev gives the example of the Simal tree which, though it is tall and wide, can bear no fruit, is dull and the flowers it bears have a very foul smell.<sup>79</sup> It serves no one's purpose, similarly, man when he is without humility or sweetness, is of no use. One should not have pride of material or financial gain or status, they are of a temporary nature and the only thing which is important is humility. Under the guidance of the Guru, man should meditate on God in all sincerity. The ego distance a man from the Lord, as one believes only in oneself as an individual.

Guru Nanak Dev spoke, "O my mind ! forsake your ego and pride."<sup>80</sup> Ego makes the whole world go astray.

Only the Guru can help us cross the ocean of this world. Guru Nanak Dev explains to us that the world is polluted with a black soot, i.e. the ego and negativity. But when a person remembers God and takes his Name, he rids himself of any vices and becomes pure and clean, even in the midst of polluted surroundings.

The ego has been described as a "serious malady" and a form of bondage.

"Guru Nanak Dev held that the whole world was suffering and only the Name of God was the remedy." (Dhanasari, M.1.p.687) It has been said that the ego is the most dangerous disease (Var Asa M.1, Slok M.2, p 466)

Shaloka M. 1

"In the ego one comes : in the ego one goes.  
In the ego one is born : in the ego one dies.  
In the ego, one gives, in the ego one takes.  
In the ego one earns, in the ego one wastes.  
In the ego is one truthful or talks like a liar.

In the ego one reflects on virtue and sin.  
In the ego we land in Heaven and Hell.  
In the ego we are happy, in the ego we are sorrowful.  
In the ego we sin, in the ego cleanse ourselves.  
In the ego we lose the distinctions of caste and kind.  
In the ego we are wise; in the ego we are unwise.  
Yea, (in the ego) we do not know the essence of deliverance.

In Ego one is involved with Maya; in the Ego one is shadowed (by doubt).

Yea, in the ego is our birth upon birth.

If one discerns the Ego within, one : realises the Gate of Deliverance.

But without wisdom, one prattles, and fights wordy duels in vain.

Nanak : through God's will is the making of our Destiny,

And as He Sees us, so should we see ourselves.”<sup>81</sup>

In this Shabad, the life cycle of the ego has been described in terms of a person being surrounded and engulfed by the ego. When one is in a state of delusion, he feels that he is the creator of everything around him. In his arrogance, he gives charity to others and takes from others. Ego causes one to be lost in the wilderness of worldly riches and poverty and because of the ego one remains in the darkness of ignorance and goes astray. One is engaged in fruitless talks and engagements because of the ego and is not able to understand his own ignorance. Then the question arises: what is the source of the ego and should one get rid of it. The answer is that the ego is a test set by God. God makes man undergo a test in order to gauge his dedication to Him and wants to see if material pleasures make man go astray or does man dedicates himself to the Name of God and follows His command. The ego is a great malady ; it chains man in the bonds of materialistic comforts and makes man go astray.

One can only be free from the ego when one has received the mercy of God. Human beings act according to the word of the Guru and meditate on God's name. This helps man to overcome the ego and free himself from its bonds.

Those who shed their egos, meditate on the Name of God and serve God are contented and satisfied and do not run after worldly pleasures. They never do anything evil; they have freed themselves of vices and live a righteous life. They remain contented with the name of God, which helps them to evade the shackles of the ego.

## Ego as Bondage

The ego has also been described as a form of bondage which makes man captive to an all-pervasive, never ending selfishness. The Guru Sahab stated that man was engulfed in the love for material things; he was so involved in this that he had forgotten the real giver, i.e. God. He forgets that he is powerless and God is all-powerful. Man is the captive of material things and is entangled in love for relations, possessions and is also engulfed by the vices of lust, anger, greed, attachment and the ego.

## The Ego as Filth

The ego is also likened to filth which cannot be washed away by any material means. It can only be wiped out by the name of God. Due to the ego, man can never be in a state of purity.<sup>82</sup>

When a person is oriented towards God and follows the teachings of the Guru i.e. he becomes a Gurmukh he

becomes the opposite of an egoistic person. A Gurmukh will always focus on purifying his mind of evil and vices. He rejects and abandons the ego. The sole remedy to banish the ego is meditating on the Name of God. When a devotee of God focusses on His Name, he develops a temperament of forgiveness, truthfulness, thankfulness, goodness and most important, love for his Creator. This makes him God-oriented and so he attains peace and solace.



## THE THREE PILLARS OF SIKHISM

When a Sikh follows the principles of remembering God while working hard with honesty, and sharing what he earns with society, these principles reflect the personality of the Sikh. A Sikh has a moral and social code of conduct to follow. He believes in the welfare of everybody and feels well-wishing for others, while acting in accordance with the teachings of the Guru and following the command of God.<sup>83</sup>

Guru Nanak Dev gave us the principles of life,

Kirat Karna  
Wand Chakhna.  
Naam Japna <sup>84</sup>

It has been put so beautifully and in such an orderly fashion as one needs to begin everything with the name of God.<sup>85</sup> One needs to remember and recite the word of God to be in communion with God.

Naam Japna is to recite and repeat the name of God. When anybody recites the name of God, he is in communion with the Lord. When we take the name of God, it helps us to overcome the vices of the ego, greed, attachment, anger and lust. It brings peace and solace to one's mind.

Guru Nanak Dev asks us how man can forget his Creator as it is to Him that our mind, life and soul belongs. Without remembering God, whatever we do is impure. Everything is false and useless if it is not pleasing to God. We have to remember our creator and surrender to Him for without His blessings we are worthless. To be successful in this world, we

have to seek the wealth of God's name: this is man's only succour and is pleasing and acceptable to God.

In Sikhism, everything is connected with the name of God. One can take the Name of the Lord while being in a congregation of Holy Saints or in private meditation. In neither cases should one follow a ritual but, with deep concentration should recite the name of God. Contemplation in solitude is as important as being in congregation.<sup>86</sup> We should go on repeating the name of God, who is the truest of the true as this is what helps us to attain true realisation.

Kirat Karni means earning one's livelihood with honest labour. When a man earns for his family, he should do so with truth, honesty, hard work and diligence. Everybody is endowed with some skill and he should use that skill to earn his living without harming or hurting anybody. Only then could the sums earned be distributed to the needy and for community service.

Kirat is central to the Sikh concept of service (*sewa*). In service there is no task which is considered low. It has been said rather that to do a task which is humble brings more honour to a Sikh. One of the biography (Janamsakhi) tells us that the Guru preferred to eat a coarse meal which was earned by the hard work of a carpenter, rather than eat a sumptuous meal at the home of a wealthy landowner.<sup>87</sup> When one has truth within oneself, this will also be reflected externally in the material world. One must earn his livelihood with the utmost honesty and hard work. When work is done with dignity and respect, it gives man a sense of fulfilment and a sense of purpose in life.

Guru Sahab advises us to be cautious about those who earn through malpractices and engage in idle talk. Such people

focus on shortcuts to earn a living and do little but talk idly. They do not want to earn by the sweat of their brow and are self-conceited, foolish worthless people. One should follow the path shown by the Guru and share the wealth earned in sanctity. The Gurus followers should spend money to help others and for godly purposes and thus enjoy peace. Guru Nanak Dev explains this in a Shabad.

*“Ghāl khāe kichh hathahu dee  
Nānak rāhu pachhāneh see.”<sup>88</sup>*

This means that those who labour to earn in order to eat and then share it with the needy are the ones who are on the right path so says Nanak.<sup>89</sup>

**Wand Chakhna** The principle of Wand Chakhna reminds man that he is a social being. It is best explained as “Sharing is caring”.

On one occasion when Guru Nanak Dev was with his two sons and Lehna (Guru Angad Dev) there was a corpse lying before them covered with a cloth. He asked who would eat this, but nobody responded. Then Lehna, having full faith in his Master, agreed to this and when he removed the cloth, he saw that there was a tray full of food, which he served to his master and ate what was left over. At this, Guru Nanak Dev said, “Lehna you were blessed with sacred food because you shared it. Similarly, people should use wealth not only for themselves but should share with others. If one consumes it only for himself, then it is like a corpse. But when we share it with others, it becomes sacred.”<sup>90</sup>

It is only when one works selflessly that one finds peace in serving others.

This is what the community kitchen (*Langar*) is based on. It is also mandatory to share one tenth of one's earning

i.e. Dasvandh with the community. This makes one acknowledge that whatever a person has received, it is by the commandment and will of God and if one has earned more than he needs, he should use this wealth for the benefit of society.

This principle also has another aspect, i.e. when we let things go, we have faith in God that he will give us more and replenish us. But when we keep things to ourselves, we feel that the things which we are clinging on to will only be enough for us. Whereas unless we have God's mercy nothing will ever be enough.

When a person follows these three principle of continually remembering God while earning his livelihood with honesty and hard work and then sharing the proceeds with the community, he has realised his potential and the purpose of his life.

## GURU NANAK DEV'S SHABAD ON PEACE

Guru Nanak Dev was an epitome of peace, love, universal brotherhood and a unique saintly personality. Gurbani is full of enlightenment which is a perfect form of bliss. Guru Nanak Dev gave us the message of piety and kindness to mankind. His focus was peace, goodwill and communion with God.

Below are the few of the Shabads of Guru Nanak Dev on Peace.<sup>91</sup>

*“Dukh parhar sukh ghar lai jāe.”*

“Your pain shall be sent far away, and peace shall come to your home.”

(SGGS, page 2)

*“Jit seviai sukh pāiai terī dargēh chalai mān.”*

“Serving Him, peace is obtained; you shall go to His Court with honor.”

(SGGS, page 15)

*“Jis ke jīa parān hai man vasiai sukh hoe.”*

“He is the Giver of the soul, and the praanaa, the breath of life; when He dwells within the mind, there is peace.”

(SGGS, page 18)

*“Gur bin kio tarāi sukh hoe.”*

“Without the Guru, how can anyone swim across to find peace?”

(SGGS, page 20)

*“Sabh sukh har ras bhogne sant sabhā mil giān.”*

“All comforts and peace, and the Essence of the Lord, are enjoyed by acquiring spiritual wisdom in the Society of the Saints.”

(SGGS, page 21)

*“Manmukh sukh na pāi gurमुख सुख subhān.”*

“The self-willed manmukhs find no peace, while the Gurmukhs are wondrously joyful.”

(SGGS, page 21)

*“Āp gaiā sukh pāi mil sallai salal samāe.”*

“Give up your selfishness, and you shall find peace; like water mingling with water, you shall merge in absorption.”

(SGGS, page 22)

*“Sukh hovai sev kamāñīā.”*

“You shall find peace, doing seva (selfless service).”

(SGGS, page 25)

*“Man re rām japahu sukh hoe.”*

“O mind, meditate on the Lord, and find peace.”

(SGGS, page 58)

*“Sukh<sub>h</sub>dāta dukh<sub>h</sub> metno satgur asur sanghār.”*

“The True Guru is the Giver of peace, the Dispeller of pain, the Destroyer of demons.”

(SGGS, page 59)

*“Gur kī sevā chākrī man nirmal sukh<sub>h</sub> hoe.”*

“Applying oneself to the service of the Guru, the mind is purified, and peace is obtained.”

(SGGS, page 61)

*“Mai tujh bin avar na bhāvē tūh bhāvēh sukh<sub>h</sub> hoe.”*

“Without You, nothing else pleases me. Loving You, I am at peace.”

(SGGS, page 61)

*“Sabad suraṭ sukh<sub>h</sub> ūpjai parabh<sub>h</sub> rātao sukh<sub>h</sub> sār.”*

“Focusing your awareness on the Shabad, happiness wells up. Attuned to God, the most excellent peace is found.”

(SGGS, page 62)

*“Sukh<sub>h</sub> jīvan tīs ākhīai jis gurmukh<sub>h</sub> vasiā soe.”*

“A life of peace and comfort comes to that Gurmukh, within whom God dwells.”

(SGGS, page 63)

*“Sukh<sub>h</sub> sevā anḍar rakhīai āpnī naḍar karahi nistār jīo.”*

“Serving You, peace is obtained; granting Your Mercy, You bestow salvation.”

(SGGS, page 72)



*“Amṛit̃ nām saḍā sukhḍāṭa gurmat̃ man vasāvaṇiā.”*

“The Ambrosial Naam, the Name of the Lord, is forever the Giver of Peace. Through the Guru’s Teachings, it dwells in the mind.”

(SGGS, page 109)

*“Gurmat̃ nām dhiāiai sukh rajā jā tuḍh bhāiā.”*

“Those who follow the Guru’s Teachings meditate on the Naam, the Name of the Lord. Filled with a joyful peace, they surrender to Your Will.”

(SGGS, page 138)

*“Sachai sabaḍ salāhi sukhīe sach vāliā.”*

“Those who praise the True Word of the Shabad, abide in the peace of Truth.”

(SGGS, page 149)

*“Satgur hoe daiāl t̃a saḍ hī sukh dehā.”*

“When the True Guru is merciful, the body is always at peace.”

(SGGS, page 149)

*“Dīnā nāth sarab sukhḍāṭa.”*

“He is the Master of the meek, the Giver of peace to all.”

(SGGS, page 154)

*“Paraṇvaṭ Nānak hukam pachhāṇai sukh hovai din rāṭī.”*

“Prays Nanak, recognizing the Lord’s Command, I am at peace, day and night.”

(SGGS, page 156)

*“Ik sukh māniā sahj milāiā.”*

“Blended with the One Lord, I enjoy intuitive peace.”

(SGGS, page 221)

*“Sukh sēhje jap riḍai murār.”*

“Intuitive peace comes by meditating on the Lord, within the heart.”

(SGGS, page 222)

*“Haumai kartiā nah sukh hoe.”*

“Acting in egotism, peace is not obtained.”

(SGGS, page 222)

*“Sabh sukh māgai nām bisārī.”*

“All beg for peace, but they forget the Naam, the Name of the Lord.”

(SGGS, page 222)

*“Amrit nām sadā sukh nālā.”*

“In the Ambrosial Nectar of the Name, you shall abide in lasting peace.”

(SGGS, page 222)

*“Bin jagḍīs kahā sukh pāvao.”*

“Without the Lord of the Universe, how can I find peace?”

(SGGS, page 225)

*“Tūn man har jīo tūn man sūkḥ.”*

“Believe in the Dear Lord, and you shall find peace of mind.”

(SGGS, page 226)

*“Nānak rām bhagaṭ sūkḥ pāvai.”*

“O Nanak, peace is obtained through devotional worship of the Lord.”

(SGGS, page 227)

*“Nij gḥar bais sahj gḥar lahīai.”*

“Dwelling in the home of your own being within, you shall find the home of intuitive peace.”

(SGGS, page 227)

*“Har ras māṭe ih sūkḥ kahīai.”*

“One who is imbued with the Lord’s sublime essence, is said to experience this peace.”

(SGGS, page 227)

*“Bin sabḍai thir ko nahī būjḥai sūkḥ hoī.”*

“Without the Word of the Shabad, nothing shall endure. Through understanding, peace is obtained.”

(SGGS, page 228)

*“Bin nām parīṭ piār nāhī vasēh sāch suhelīā.”*

“Without the Naam, the Name of the Lord, there is no love and affection; but with her True Lord, she abides in peace.”

(SGGS, page 242)

*“Garihu ban samsar sahj subhāe.”*

“Home and forest are the same, for one who dwells in the balance of intuitive peace and poise.”

(SGGS, page 351)

*“Sifaṭ salāhaṇ sahj anand.”*

“In the Lord’s Praise and adoration is intuitive peace, poise and bliss.”

(SGGS, page 352)

*“Har har nām bhagaṭ paria parīṭam sukh sāgar ur dhāre.”*

“The Name of the Lord, Har, Har, is sweet and dear to His devotees; it is the ocean of peace - enshrine it within the heart.”

(SGGS, page 353)

*“Gur sukhḍāṭa avar na bhāl.”*

“The Guru is the Giver of peace; do not look for any other.”

(SGGS, page 412)

*“Sukh mānai bhetai gur pīr.”*

“Peace is enjoyed, meeting the Guru, the Spiritual Teacher.”

(SGGS, page 413)

*“Samajh sūjh sahj ghar hovēh.”*

“One who knows and understands, enters the home of peace and poise.”

(SGGS, page 413)

*“Amṛit̐ nām vasiā sukḥdāta.”*

“The Ambrosial name, the Giver of Peace, abides within my mind.”

(SGGS, page 415)

*“Chit̐ lāgā seī jan nistare tao parsādī sukḥ pāiā.”*

“Those humble beings, whose consciousness is so linked, are saved; by Your Grace, they obtain peace.”

(SGGS, page 433)

*“Parabh̐ parem rātī har binantī nām har kai sukḥ vasai.”*

“Imbued with the Love of God, I pray to the Lord, and through the Lord's Name, I abide in peace.”

(SGGS, page 436)

*“Sādh̐ sabhā sanṭā kī sangat̐ naḍar parabhū sukḥ pāiā.”*

“In the Company of the Holy, and the Saints' Society, by God's Grace, peace is obtained.”

(SGGS, page 437)

*“Jinh̐ ik man dhīāiā tīnh̐ sukḥ pāiā te virle sansār jīo.”*

“Those who meditate on Him single-mindedly obtain peace; how rare are they in this world.”

(SGGS, page 438)

*“Nām lainiḥ sé sohēh tīnḥ sukh fal hovēh mānēh se  
jiṇ jāhi jīo.”*

“Those who chant the name look beautiful; they obtain the fruit of peace. Those who believe in the Name win the game of life.”

(SGGS, page 438)

*“Satgur bhete so sukh pāe.”*

“One who meets the True Guru finds peace.”

(SGGS, page 468)

*“Jit seviai sukh pāiai so sāhib saḍā samhālīai.”*

“Serving Him, peace is obtained; meditate and dwell upon that Lord and Master forever.”

(SGGS, page 474)

*“Bin har bhagaṭ nāhī sukh parānī bin gur garab na  
jāi.”*

“Without devotional worship to the Lord, O mortal, there can be no peace. Without the Guru, pride does not depart.”

(SGGS, page 504)

*“Dukh gaiā sukh āe samānā.”*

“My pains are dispelled, and I am permeated with peace.”

(SGGS, page 566)

*“Nām dhiāe tā sukh pāe bin nāvai piṛ kachī.”*

“Meditating on the Name of the Lord, one obtains peace; without the name, he plays a losing game.”

(SGGS, page 581)

*“Man re rām japahu sukh hoī.”*

“O mind, chant the Name of the Lord, and be at peace.”

(SGGS, page 598)

*“Dekh adrist rahao bismāḍī dukh bisrai sukh hoī jīo.”*

“Seeing the unseen Lord, you shall be amazed and delighted; forgetting your pain, you shall be at peace.”

(SGGS, page 599)

*“Manūā pauṇ bind sukhvāsī nām vasai sukh bhāī.”*

“The mind is like the wind, but if it comes to rest in peace, even for an instant, then he shall abide in the peace of the Name, O Siblings of Destiny.”

(SGGS, page 634)

*“Sāchā nām dhīāe pāvahi sukh mahlo.”*

“Meditate on the True Name, and you shall find peace in the Mansion of the Lord's Presence.”

(SGGS, page 689)

*“Niṭ niṭ khusā man kare niṭ niṭ mangai sukh jīo.”*

“Constantly, continually, the mortal seeks pleasures. Constantly, continually, he begs for peace.”

(SGGS, page 751)

*“Jio rākḥahi kirpā dhār tīvai sukh pāīai.”*

“As You keep me, in Your Merciful Grace, so do I find peace.”

(SGGS, page 752)



*“Mai dījai nām nivās anṭar sāṁt hoe.”*

“Please, bless me with a home in Your Name; may my inner self be at peace.”

(SGGS, page 753)

*“Gur kī paoṛī sāch kī sāchā sukh hoī.”*

“Truth is the ladder to the Guru; climbing up to the True Lord, peace is obtained.”

(SGGS, page 766)

*“Sabaḍ raṭe saḍā sukh hoī.”*

“Imbued with the Word of the Shabad, eternal peace is attained.”

(SGGS, page 831)

*“Gurmukh sāṁt ūṭam karāmaṁ.”*

“The Gurmukh lives in peace and tranquility, doing deeds of sublime purity.”

(SGGS, page 831)

*“Bin gur bhagaṭ nāhī sukh thīā.”*

“Without devotional worship to the Guru, there is no peace.”

(SGGS, page 832)

*“Parāṇī rām bhagaṭ sukh pāīai.”*

“O mortal, through devotion to the Lord, peace is obtained.”

(SGGS, page 903)

*“Gur kī saraṇ pavaī sukh̐ thīai.”*

“Seeking the Sanctuary of the Guru, peace is found.”

(SGGS, page 904)

*“Nām binā kaise sukh̐ pāvai.”*

“Without the Naam, how can one find peace?”

(SGGS, page 906)

*“Jis no dee kirpā te sukh̐ pāe.”*

“They alone find peace, whom the Lord blesses with His Grace.”

(SGGS, page 930)

*“Kar āchār sach̐ sukh̐ hoī.”*

“Living a righteous lifestyle, true peace is found.”

(SGGS, page 931)

*“Chīteh̐ ek̐ tahī sukh̐ hoe.”*

“He alone finds peace, who thinks of the One Lord.”

(SGGS, page 932)

*“Dāhpaṇ tan sukh̐ nahī bin dar biṇathī dār.”*

“In jealousy, the body is not at peace; without the Fear of God, multitudes are ruined.”

(SGGS, page 933)

*“Sabaḍ mahli kharā tū khimā sach sukh bhāe.”*

“Through the Word of the Shabad, enter the Mansion of the Lord’s Presence; you shall be blessed with patience, forgiveness, truth and peace.”

(SGGS, page 937)

*“Har bin kin sukh pāiā dekhu man bīchār.”*

“Without the Lord, who has found peace? Reflect upon this in your mind, and see.”

(SGGS, page 937)

*“Nānak sāch rate sukh jāṇ.”*

“O Nanak, those who are attuned to the Truth know peace.”

(SGGS, page 941)

*“Nānak nām rate saḍā sukh hoe.”*

“O Nanak, attuned to the Naam, eternal peace is found.”

(SGGS, page 941)

*“Mukaṭ mahā sukh gur sabaḍ bīchār.”*

“The supreme peace of liberation is attained, contemplating the Word of the Guru’s Shabad.”

(SGGS, page 942)

*“Sahj bhāe milīai sukh hovai.”*

“Meeting with the Lord through intuition and love, peace is found.”

(SGGS, page 944)

*“Taj sād sahj sukh hoī.”*

“Abandon the tastes of the world, and find intuitive peace.”

(SGGS, page 989)

*“Gurmaṭī sahj ūpjai sachē rahai samāe.”*

“Following the Guru's Teachings, intuitive peace wells up within them, and they remain merged in the True Lord.”

(SGGS, page 1009)

*“Nām na japī kio sukh pāvai bin nāvai kio sohai.”*

“Without chanting the name, how can he find peace? Without the Name, how can he look good?”

(SGGS, page 1013)

*“Bin satgur seve kio sukh pāīai sāchē hāth vadāi he.”*

“Without serving the True Guru, how can she find peace? Glorious greatness rests in the hands of the True Lord.”

(SGGS, page 1022)

*“Tis kī ot gahī sukh pāīā man ṭan mail na kāī he.”*

“Seeking His Shelter, they find peace, and their minds and bodies are not stained with filth.”

(SGGS, page 1023)

*“Jin pāīā ṭin pūchhahu bhāī sukh satgur sev kamāī he.”*

“So ask one who has obtained it, O Siblings of Destiny. Serve the True Guru, and find peace.”

(SGGS, page 1026)

*“Amṛit̃ nām gurū vad dāṇā nām japahu sukh̃ sārā he.”*

“The Guru is the Great Giver of the Ambrosial Naam, the Name of the Lord. Chanting the Naam, sublime peace is obtained.”

(SGGS, page 1029)

*“Nām visār kahā sukh̃ pāvahi.”*

“Forgetting the name, how can they find peace?”

(SGGS, page 1029)

*“Nānak sāch̃ kahai benant̃ mil sāch̃e sukh̃ pāiḍā.”*

“Nanak offers this true prayer; meeting with the True Lord, peace is obtained.”

(SGGS, page 1035)

*“Joī sarūp saḍā sukh̃dāta sach̃e sobhā pāiḍā.”*

“The Giver of peace is forever the embodiment of Light; from the True Lord, glory is obtained.”

(SGGS, page 1036)

*“Ātam rām pāe sukh̃ thīā.”*

“Finding the Lord, the Supreme Soul, peace is established.”

(SGGS, page 1039)

*“Haumai met sabaḍ sukh̃ hoī.”*

“Eradicating egotism, he obtains the peace of the Shabad.”

(SGGS, page 1040)

*“Gurmaṭ leho tarahu bhav duṭar mukaṭ bhae sukh pāiā.”*

“Accepting the Guru’s Teachings, cross over the arduous, terrifying world-ocean; you shall be emancipated, and find peace.”

(SGGS, page 1041)

*“Moh pasār nahī sang belī bin har gur kin sukh pāiā.”*

“In this world of love and attachment, no one is anyone else’s friend or companion; without the Lord, without the Guru, who has ever found peace?”

(SGGS, page 1043)

*“Rām nām bin kio sukh pāiai bin satgur bharam na jāiā.”*

“But without the Lord’s Name, how can anyone find peace? Without the True Guru, doubt is not dispelled.”

(SGGS, page 1043)

*“Nānak ḍarisat ḍiragh sukh pāvai gur sabḍī man ḍhīrā.”*

“O Nanak, I have obtained profound insight, and found peace; my mind is comforted by the Word of the Guru’s Shabad.”

(SGGS, page 1107)

*“Nānak mūrakh ajahu na chetai kiv ḍūjai sukh pāve.”*

“O Nanak, the fool still does not remember the Lord. How can he find peace in duality?”

(SGGS, page 1110)

*“Gur pūchh jāge nām lāge tīnā rain suhelā.”*

“The night is pleasant and peaceful, for those who remain awake; following the Guru’s advice, they focus on the name.”

(SGGS, page 1110)

*“Sāchā sāhu gurū sukhḍātā har mele bhukh gavāe.”*

“The Guru is the True Banker, the Giver of peace; He unites the mortal with the Lord, and satisfies his hunger.”

(SGGS, page 1171)

*“Apnā kaj savārahu āpe sukhḍāte gosāñh.”*

“He Himself shall resolve all your affairs, when you meet with the Giver of peace, the Lord of the World.”

(SGGS, page 1273)

*“Rūrao thākur nānkā sabh sukh sāchao nām.”*

“Our Lord and Master is so beautiful, O Nanak; all comfort and peace are in the Name of the True Lord.”

(SGGS, page 1279)

*“Se sukhīe saḍā sohṇe jinḥ vichahu āp gavāe.”*

“They are peaceful and beautiful forever; they eradicate self-conceit from within.”

(SGGS, page 1281)

*“Jinī seviā tīnī sukh pāīā gurmatī vīchār.”*

“Those who serve You find peace, reflecting on the Guru’s Teachings.”

(SGGS, page 1286)

*“Āṇṇai bhāṇai kaho kin sukh pāiā andhā andh  
kamāi.”*

“Tell me, who has ever found peace by following his own will?” The blind act in blindness.

(SGGS, page 1287)

*“Sukhman kai ghar rāg sun sunn mandal liv lāe.”*

“Listen to the music of the home of the heart - Sukhmani, peace of mind. Lovingly tune in to His state of celestial ecstasy.”

(SGGS, page 1291)

*“Nāe terai sahj nāe sālāh.”*

“Your Name brings intuitive peace and poise; Your Name brings praise.”

(SGGS, page 1327)

*“Nāe terai sabh sukh vasēh man āe.”*

“Through Your Name, all peace and comfort comes to abide in the mind.”

(SGGS, page 1327)

*“Sāch sahj sukh nām vasāi.”*

“True intuitive peace and poise rest in the Name.”

(SGGS, page 1331)

*“Gur updes sāch sukh jā kao kiā tis upmā kahīai.”*

“Those who follow the Guru's Teachings find true peace - how can I even describe the glory of such a person?”

(SGGS, page 1332)



*“Sukhḍāṭa seve nirmal hoe.”*

“Serving the Giver of peace, they become immaculate.”

(SGGS, page 1343)

*“Sukhḍāṭa dukh metaṇhārā.”*

“The Giver of peace is the Eradicator of pain.”

(SGGS, page 1343)

*“Satgur sev saḍā sukh hoī.”*

“Serve the True Guru, and you shall be at peace forever.”

(SGGS, page 1343)

*“Bhao khāṇā pīṇā sukh sār.”*

“Those who eat and drink the Fear of God, find the most excellent peace.”

(SGGS, page 1345)

*“Sahjai sahj milai sukh pāṭai dargéh paidhā jāe.”*

“Merging intuitively in the Celestial Lord, peace is obtained, and one goes to the Lord’s Court wearing robes of honor.”

(SGGS, page 1345)

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